



For Immediate Release  
April 25, 2007

Contact: Carol Guthrie  
(202) 224-4515

## **BAUCUS INITIATIVES BOOST COMPETITIVENESS BILL**

*Finance Chairman sought to improve education, energy provisions in Senate legislation, understand how globalization affects American services workers*

**Washington, DC** – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) today expanded Senate competitiveness legislation to promote 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills and distance learning. He also applauded the bill's creation of a new agency to develop energy alternatives, and won approval of an effort to study the effects of globalization on U.S. services workers – who hold eight out of 10 American jobs. Baucus launched a comprehensive competitiveness effort with six bills last year, including major education and trade enforcement legislation, and called for the creation of an Advanced Research Projects Agency for Energy – the ARPA-E included in the Senate's bill today.

**“Congress's efforts to improve American competitiveness should be as comprehensive as possible. I wanted to sharpen this bill's educational focus by insisting on twenty-first century learning skills for all our students, and by improving opportunities for rural kids to learn,”** said Baucus. **“The Senate has done the right thing by finally creating an out-of-the-box energy research agency. Although I think ARPA-E needs to be completely independent of the Energy Department, this is a good start. And taking a fresh look at how globalization affects American workers will help us make even better policy going forward.”**

Baucus amendments added to S. 761, the America Competes Act, include:

- **21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Skills:** Sharpens educational provisions in the America Competes Act by outlining what skills should be incorporated into a state's educational curriculum plan – such as information and communication skills and thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as global awareness, financial, economic and business literacy, and civic literacy. This amendment requires states to include 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning skills in a comprehensive education plan from preschool all the way through college.
- **Distance Learning:** Builds on critical language provisions in the America Competes Act by helping rural areas improve critical language programs. This amendment provides grant money for language programs in rural areas to use distance learning technology.

*--1 more--*

- **Service Industry Competitiveness:** Improves our understanding of U.S. competitiveness by looking at the effects of globalization. Services industries account for 80 percent of U.S. economy and the United States retains a trade surplus in services exports – but government economic studies remain focused on the manufacturing and agriculture sectors. This amendment would dedicate funds for annual Department of Commerce studies of the services economy and its competitiveness.

*See Baucus's original ARPA-E proposal at*

*<http://finance.senate.gov/press/Bpress/2005press/prb030806e.pdf>. View his Education*

*Competitiveness bill at <http://finance.senate.gov/press/Bpress/2005press/prb091406a.pdf>.*

###